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Senate introduces bill to expand business opportunities for private labs

LANSING – Expanding the number of private environmental labs eligible to earn business from the state would provide additional job opportunities in Michigan under legislation introduced in the Senate Tuesday, announced Sen. Patty Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Twp.

The legislation would create a state-lab accreditation program. It would establish uniform laboratory performance standards to expand commercial laboratory business opportunities with the state.

“Expanding this program will provide a much-needed boost to Michigan’s economy and environment,” said Birkholz, chairperson of the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee. “Bringing new environmental businesses and opening new labs in Michigan will provide residents with jobs. It also will allow the state to do more testing to protect our natural resources.”

The legislation is part of the second phase of JOBS – “Job Opportunities for Business Success” – a broad Republican plan for revitalizing Michigan’s economy. JOBS II continues the effort of the initial JOBS plan by creating new job opportunities, saving existing jobs, and promoting a friendlier and healthier business climate in Michigan.

The five-bill package will provide for baseline performance standards for lab procedures, personnel training and equipment. These standards are to ensure the state Department of Environmental Quality can rely upon lab data to confirm cleanups of contaminated sites and other environmental testing.

Currently, the state will only accept work from four or five private labs in Michigan. This artificial restriction eliminates the incentive for other businesses to locate and do business in Michigan and is contributing to a lack of competition in the state.

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